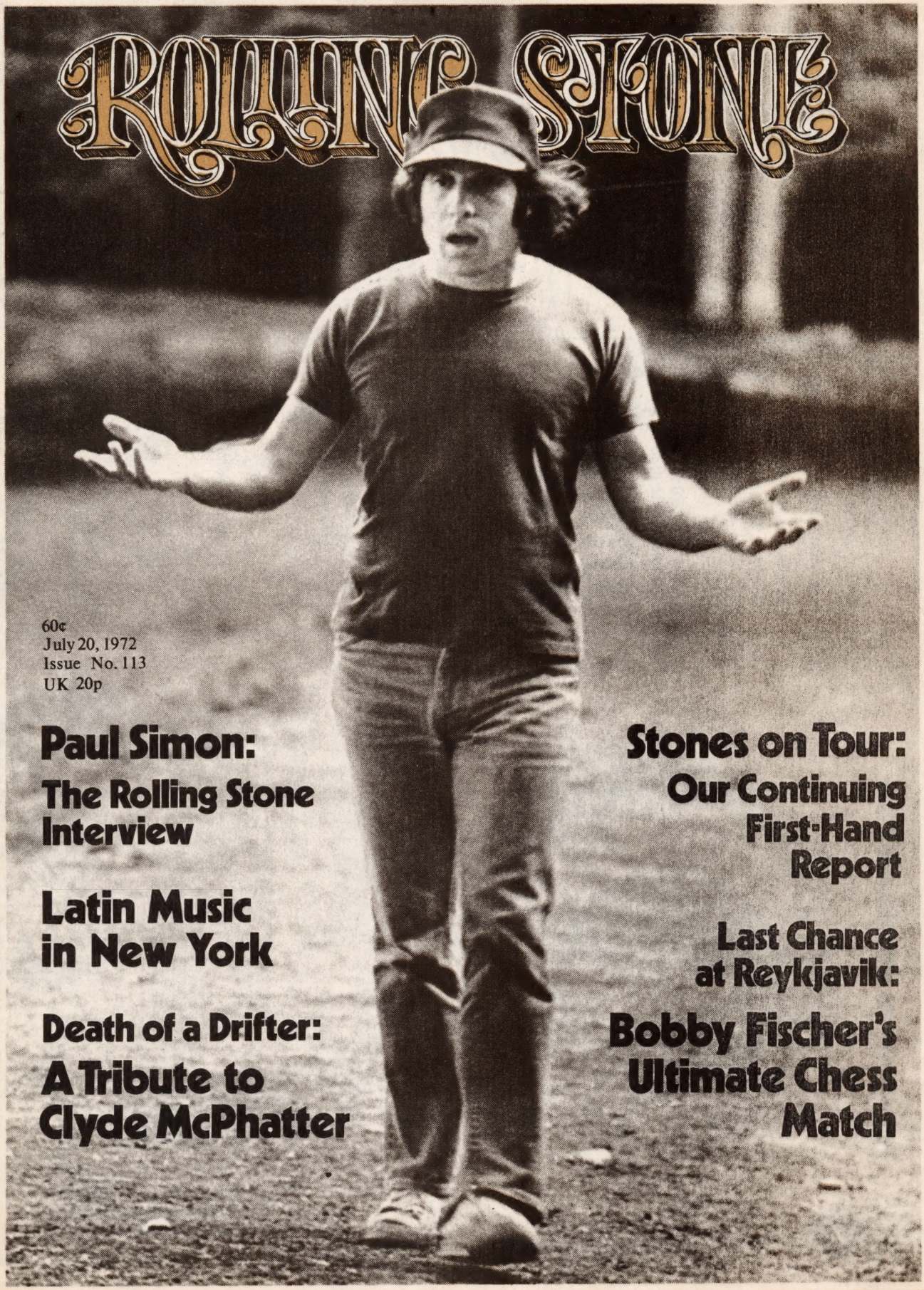

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Paul Simon:
The Rolling Stone Interview

Latin Music in New York

Death of a Drifter:
A Tribute to Clyde McPhatter

Stones on Tour:
Our Continuing First-Hand Report

Last Chance at Reykjavik:
Bobby Fischer's Ultimate Chess Match

Fear and Loathing:

In the Eye of the Hurricane

by Hunter S. Thompson

Mass Burial for Political Bosses in New York . . . McGovern over the Hump . . . What Next for the Good Ole Boys? . . . Treachery Looms in Miami . . . a Boohoo in the Wings

It is now clear that this once small devoted band has become a great surging multitude all across this country — and it will not be denied.

George McGovern, on the night of the New York primary

The day after the New York primary I woke up in a suite on the 24th floor of Delmonico's Hotel on Park Avenue with a hellish wind tearing both rooms apart and rain coming in through all the open windows . . . and I thought: Yes, wonderful, only a lunatic would get out of bed on a day like this; call room service for grapefruit and coffee, along with a New York Times for brain food, and one of those portable brick-dome fireplaces full of oil-soaked sawdust logs that they can roll right into the suite and fire up at the foot of the bed.

Indeed. Get some heat in the room, but keep the windows open — for the sounds of the wind and the rain and the far-off honking of all those taxi horns down on Park Avenue.

Then fill a hot bath and get something like *Memphis Underground* on the tape machine. Relax, relax. Enjoy this fine rainy day, and send the bill to Random House. The budget boys won't like it, but to hell with them. Random House still owes me a lot of money from that time when the night watchman beat my snake to death on the white marble steps leading up to the main reception desk.

I had left it overnight in the editor's office, sealed up in a cardboard box with a sacrificial mouse . . . but the mouse understood what was happening, and terror gave him strength to gnaw a hole straight through the side of the box and escape into the bowels of the building.

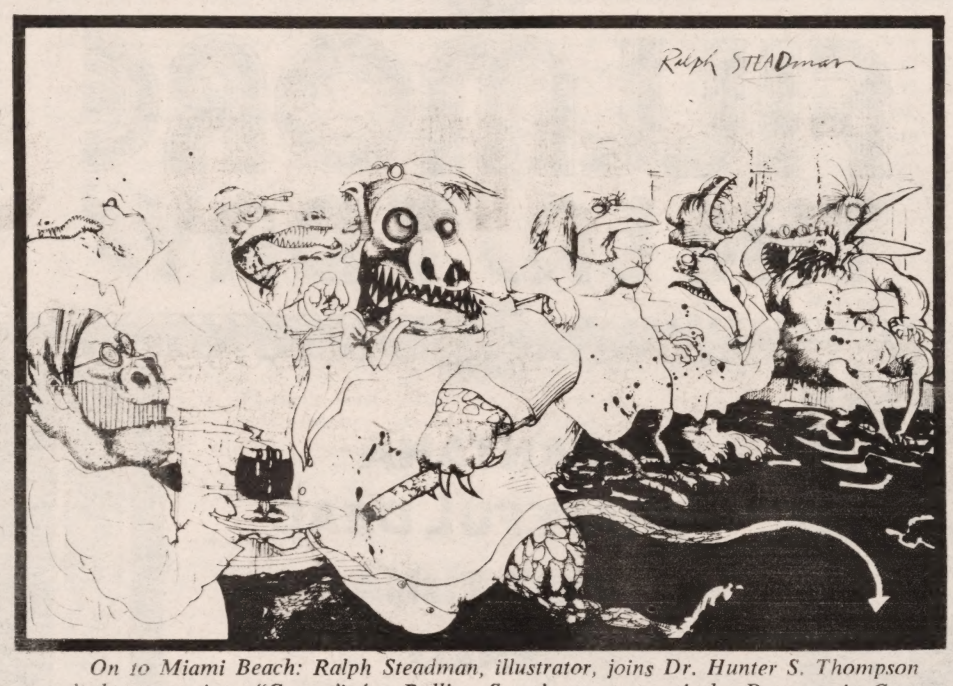
The snake followed, of course — through the same hole — and somewhere around dawn, when the night watchman went out to check the main door, he was confronted with a six-foot blue-black serpent slithering rapidly up the stairs, flicking its tongue at him and hissing a warning that he was sure — according to his own account of the incident — was the last sound he would ever hear.

The snake was a harmless Blue Indigo that I'd just brought back from a reptile farm in Florida . . . but the watchman had no way of knowing; he had never seen a snake. Most natives of Manhattan Island are terrified of all animals except cockroaches and poodles . . . so when this poor ignorant bastard of a watchman suddenly found himself menaced by a hissing, six-foot serpent coming fast up the stairs at him from the general direction of Cardinal Spellman's quarters just across the courtyard . . . he said the sight of it made him almost crazy with fear, and at first he was totally paralyzed.

Then, as the snake kept on coming, some primal instinct shocked him out of his trance and gave him the strength to attack the thing with the first weapon he could get his hands on — which he first described as a "steel broom handle," but which further investigation revealed to have been a metal tube jerked out of a nearby vacuum cleaner.

The battle apparently lasted some 20 minutes: A terrible clanging and screaming in the empty marble entranceway, and finally the watchman prevailed. Both the serpent and the vacuum tube were beaten beyond recognition, and later that morning a copy editor found the watchman slumped on a stool in the basement next to the xerox machine, still gripping the mangled tube and unable to say what was wrong with him except that something horrible had tried to get him, but he finally managed to kill it.

The man has since retired, they say. Cardinal Spellman died and Random House moved to a new building. But the psychic scars remain, a dim memory of



On to Miami Beach: Ralph Steadman, illustrator, joins Dr. Hunter S. Thompson and the mysterious "Crouse" for Rolling Stone's coverage of the Democratic Convention in issue 115, on sale August 1st. Reserve your copy now . . .

corporate guilt that is rarely mentioned except in times of stress or in arguments over money. Every time I start feeling a bit uneasy about running up huge bills on the Random House tab, I think about that snake — and then I call room service again.

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STATE VOTE AIDS M'GOVERN:
SENATOR'S SLATES WIN
BY LARGE MARGINS
IN THE SUBURBS

That was the Times' big headline on Wednesday morning. The "3 As candidate" had definitely improved his position by carrying the suburbs. The bulk of the political coverage on page one had to do with local races; "Ryan, Badillo, Rangel Win: Coller is in Close Battle" . . . "Delegates Named" . . . "Bingham Defeats Scheuer; Rooney Apparent Winner."

Down at the bottom of the page was a block of wire-photos from the National Mayors' Conference in New Orleans — also on Tuesday — and the choice shot from down there showed a smiling Hubert Humphrey sitting next to Mayor Daley of Chicago with the Mayor of Miami Beach leaning into the scene with one of his arms around Daley and the other around Hubert.

The caption said "Ex-Mayor Is Hit With Mayors." The "details, Page 28" said Humphrey had definitely emerged as the star of the Mayors' conference. The two losers were shown in smaller photos underneath the Daley-Humphrey thing. Muskie "received polite applause," the caption said, and the camera had apparently caught him somewhere near the beginning of a delayed Ibogaine rush: his eyes are clouding over, his jaw has gone slack, his hair appears to be combed back in a DA.

The caption under the McGovern photo says, "He, too, received moderate response." But McGovern at least looked human, while the other four looked like they had just been trucked over on short notice from some third-rate wax museum in the French Quarter. The only genuinely ugly face of the five is that of Mayor Daley: he looks like a potato with mange — it is the face of a man who would see nothing wrong with telling his son to go out and round up a gang of thugs with bullhorns and kick the shit out of anybody stupid enough to challenge the Mayor of Chicago's right to name the next Democratic candidate for President of the United States.

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I stared at the front page for a long time; there was something wrong with it, but I couldn't quite fix on the problem until . . . yes . . . I realized that the whole front page of the June 21st New York Times could just as easily have been dated March 8th, the day after the New Hampshire primary.

"Pacification" was failing again in Vietnam; Laird was demanding more bombers; ITT was beating another illegal stock-sales rap . . . but the most striking similarity was in the overall impression of what was happening in the fight for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Apparently nothing had changed. Muskie looked just as sick and confused as he had on that cold Wednesday morning in Manchester four months ago. McGovern looked like the same tough but hopeless underdog — and there was nothing in the face of either Daley or Humphrey to indicate that either one of those corrupt and vicious old screws had any doubt at all about what was going to happen in Miami in July. They appeared to be very pleased with whatever the mayor of Miami Beach was saying to them. . . .

An extremely depressing front page, at first glance — almost rancid with a sense of deja vu. There was even a Kennedy story: Will he or Won't he?

This was the most interesting story on the page, if only because of the timing. Teddy had been out of the campaign news for a few months, but now — according to the Times' R. W. Apple Jr. — he was about to make his move:

"City Councilman Matthew J. Troy Jr. will announce today that he is supporting Senator Edward M. Kennedy for the Democratic vice-presidential nomination, informed sources said last night. Mr. Troy, a long-time political ally of the Kennedy family, was one of the earliest supporters of Senator George McGovern for the Presidency. As such, he would be unlikely to propose a running mate for the South Dakotan unless both men had indicated their approval."

Unlikely.

Right. The logic was hard to deny. A McGovern/Kennedy ticket was probably the only sure winner available to the Democrats this year, but beyond that it might solve all of Kennedy's problems with one stroke. It would give him at least four and probably eight years in the spotlight; an unnaturally powerful and popular vice-president with all the advantages of the office and very few of the risks. If McGovern ran wild and called for the abolition of Free Enterprise, for instance, Kennedy could back off and shake his head sadly . . . but if McGovern did everything right and won a second term as the most revered and successful president in the nation's history, Teddy would be right there beside him — the other half of the team; so clearly the heir apparent that he would hardly have to bother about campaigning in public in 1980.

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Don't worry, boys, we'll weather this storm of approval and come out as hated as ever.

—Saul Alinsky to his staff shortly before his death, June 1972

The primaries are finally over now: 23 of the goddam things — and the deal is about to go down. New York was the last big spectacle before Miami Beach, and this time McGovern's people really kicked out the jams. They stomped every hack, ward-heeler and "old-line party boss" from Buffalo to Brooklyn. The Democratic Party in New York State was left in a frightened shambles.

Not even the state party leader, Joe Crangle, survived the McGovern blitz. He tried to pass for "uncommitted" — hoping to go down to Miami with at least a small remnant of the big-time bargaining power he'd planned on when he originally backed Muskie — but McGovern's merciless young street fighters chopped Crangle down with the others. He will watch the convention on TV, along with Brooklyn Party boss Meade Esposito and once-powerful Bronx leader Patrick Cunningham.

Former NY Governor Averell Harriman also wound up on the list of exheavies who will not attend the convention. He too was an early Muskie supporter. The last time I saw Averell he was addressing a small crowd in the West Palm Beach railroad station — framed in a halo of spotlights on the caboose platform of Big Ed's Sunshine Special . . . and the Man from Maine was standing tall beside him, smiling broadly, looking every inch the winner that all those half-bright party bosses had assured him he was definitely going to be.

It was just about dusk when Harriman began speaking, as I recall, and Muskie might have looked a little less pleased if he'd had any way of knowing that 10 blocks away, while Ave was still talking—it was also just about dusk when a human threshing machine named Peter Sheridan was eagerly hitting the bricks after two weeks in the Palm Beach jail on a vagrancy rap.

Unknown to either Big Ed or Peter, their paths were soon destined to cross. Twelve hours later, Sheridan—the infamous wandering BooHoo for the Neo-American church—would board the Sunshine Special for the last leg of the trip into Miami.

That encounter is already legend. I am not especially proud of my role in it—mainly because the nightmare developed entirely by accident—but if I could go back and try it all over again I wouldn't change a note.

At the time I felt a bit guilty about it: putting the Demo front-runner on a collision course with a gin-crazed acid freak—but that was before I realized what kind of a beast I was dealing with.

It was not until his campaign collapsed and his ex-staffers felt free to talk that I learned that working for Big Ed was something like being locked in a rolling boxcar with a vicious 200-pound water rat. Some of his top staff people considered him dangerously unstable. He had several identities, they said, and there was no way to be sure on any given day if they would have to deal with Abe Lincoln, Hamlet, Capt. Queeg or Bobo the Simpleminded. . . .

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Many strange Muskie stories, but this is not the time for them. Perhaps after the convention, when the pressure lets off a bit—although not even that is certain, now: Things are getting weird.

The only "Muskie story" that interests me right now is the one about how he managed to con those poor bastards into making him the de facto party leader and also the bosses' choice to carry the party colors against Nixon in November. I want to know that story, and if anybody who reads this can fill me in on the details, by all means call at once c/o ROLLING STONE, San Francisco.

The Muskie nightmare is beginning to look more and more like a major political watershed for the Democratic party. When Big Ed went down he took about half of the national power structure with him. In one state after another—each time he lost a primary—Muskie crippled and humiliated the local Democratic power-mongers: Governors, Mayors, Senators, Congressmen . . . Big Ed was supposed to be their ticket to Miami, where they planned to do business as usual once again, and keep the party at least liveable, if not entirely healthy. All Muskie

—Continued on Next Page

Fear and Loathing

—Continued from Preceding Page

had to do, they said, was keep his mouth shut and act like Abe Lincoln.

The bosses would do the rest. As for that hare-brained bastard McGovern, he could take those reformist ideas he'd been working on, and jam them straight up his ass. A convention packed wall to wall with Muskie delegates—the rancid cream of the party, as it were—would make short work of McGovern's Boy Scout bullshit.

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That was four months ago, before Muskie began crashing around the country in a stupid rage and destroying every thing he touched. First it was booze, then Reds, and finally over the brink into Ibogaine . . . and it was right about that time that most of the Good Ole Boys decided to take another long look at Hubert Humphrey. He wasn't much; they all agreed on that—but by May he was all they had left.

Not much, for sure. Any political party that can't cough up anything better than a treacherous, brain-damaged old vulture like Hubert Humphrey deserves every beating it gets. They don't hardly make 'em like Hubert any more—but just to be on the safe side, he should be castrated anyway.

Castrated? Great Scott! Is nothing sacred? Four years ago Hubert Humphrey ran for President of the United States on the Democratic ticket—and he almost won.

It was a very narrow escape. I voted for Dick Gregory in '68, and if somehow Humphrey manages to slither onto the ticket again this year I will vote for Richard Nixon.

But Humphrey will not be on the ticket this year—at least not on the Democratic ticket. He may end up running with Nixon, but the odds are against him there, too. Not even Nixon could stoop to Hubert's level.

So what will Humphrey do with himself this year? Is there no room at the top for a totally dishonest person? A *United States Senator?* A loyal Party Man?

Well . . . as much as I hate to get away from objective journalism, even briefly, there is no other way to explain what that treacherous bastard appears to be cranking himself up for this time around, except by slipping momentarily into the realm of speculation.

But first, a few realities: 1) George McGovern is so close to a first ballot nomination in Miami that everybody except Hubert Humphrey, Gene McCarthy, Shirley Chisholm and Ed Muskie seems ready to accept it as a foregone conclusion . . . 2) The national Democratic party is no longer controlled by the Old Guard, "Boss" style hacks like George Meany and Mayor Daley — or even by the Old Guard liberal-manque types like Larry O'Brien, who thought they had things firmly under control as recently as six months ago . . . 3) McGovern has made it painfully clear that he wants more than just the nomination; he has every intention of tearing the Democratic party completely apart and re-building it according to his own blueprint . . . 4) If McGovern beats Nixon in November he will be in a position to do anything he wants either to or with the party structure . . . 5) But if McGovern loses in November, control of the Democratic party will instantly revert to the Ole Boys, and McGovern himself will be labeled "another Goldwater" and stripped of any power in the party.

The pattern is already there, from 1964, when the Nixon-Mitchell brain-trust — already laying plans for 1968 — sat back and let the GOP machinery fall into the hands of the Birchers and the right wing crazies for a few months . . . and when Goldwater got stomped, the Nixon-Mitchell crowd moved in and took over the party with no argument from anybody . . . and four years later Nixon moved into the White House.

There have already been a few rumblings and muted threats along these lines from the Daley-Meany faction. Daley has privately threatened to dump Illinois to Nixon in November if McGovern persists in challenging Daley's 85-man slave delegation to the convention in Miami . . . and Meany is prone to muttering out loud from time to time that maybe Organized Labor would be better off in the long run by enduring another four years under Nixon, rather than run the risk of whatever radical madness he fears McGovern might bring down on him.

The only other person who has said anything about taking a dive for Nixon in November is Hubert Humphrey, who has already threatened in public — at the party's Credentials committee hearings in Washington last week — to let his friend Joe Alioto, the Mayor of San Francisco, throw the whole state of California to Nixon unless the party gives Hubert 151 California delegates — on the basis of his losing show of strength in that state's winner-take-all primary.

Hubert understood all along that California was all or nothing. He continually referred to it as "The Big One," and "the Super Bowl of the Primaries" . . . but he changed his mind when he lost. One of the finest flashes of TV journalism in many months appeared on the CBS evening news the same day Humphrey formally filed his claim to almost half the California delegation. It was a Walter Cronkite interview with Hubert in California, a week or so prior to election day. Cronkite asked him if he had any objections to the winner-take-all aspect of the California primary, and Humphrey replied that he thought it was absolutely wonderful.

"So even if you lose out here — if you lose all 271 delegates — you wouldn't challenge the winner-take-all rule?" Cronkite asked.

"Oh, my goodness, no," Hubert said. "That would make me sort of a spoilsport, wouldn't it?"

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The St. Louis Lawyer & the Fixer-Man

On the face of it, McGovern seems to have everything under control now. Less than 24 hours after the New York results were final, chief delegate-meister Rick Stearns announced that George was over the hump. The New York blitz was the cincher, pushing him over the 1350 mark and mashing all but the flimsiest chance that anybody would continue to talk seriously about a "Stop McGovern" movement in Miami. The Humphrey-Muskie axis had been desperately trying to put something together with aging diehards like Wilbur Mills, George Meany and Mayor Daley—hoping to stop McGovern just short of 1400—but on the weekend after the NY sweep George picked up another 50 or so from the last of the non-primary state caucuses and by Sunday, June 25th, he was only 100 votes away from the 1509 that would zip it all up on the first ballot.

At that point the number of officially "uncommitted" delegates was still hovering around 450, but there had already been some small-scale defections to McGovern, and the others were getting nervous. The whole purpose of getting yourself elected as an Uncommitted delegate is to be able to arrive at the Convention with bargaining power. Ideology has nothing to do with it.

If you're a lawyer from St. Louis, for instance, and you manage to get yourself elected as an Uncommitted delegate from Missouri, you will hustle down to Miami and start scouting around for somebody to make a deal with . . . which won't take long, because every candidate still in the running for anything at all will have dozens of his own personal fixers roaming around the hotel bars and buttonholing Uncommitted delegates to find out what they want.

If your price is a lifetime appointment as a judge on the U.S. Circuit Court, your only hope is to deal with a candidate who is so close to that magic 1509 figure that he can no longer function in public because of uncontrollable drooling. If he is stuck around 1400 you will probably not have much luck getting that bench appointment . . . but if he's already up to 1499 he won't hesitate to offer you the first opening on the U. S. Supreme Court . . . and if you catch him peaked at 1505 or so, you can squeeze him for almost anything you want.

The game will get heavy sometimes. You don't want to go around putting the squeeze on people unless you're absolutely clean. No skeletons in the closet; no secret vices . . . because if your vote is important and your price is high, the Fixer-Man will have already checked you out by the time he offers to buy you a drink. If you bribed a traffic court clerk two years ago to bury a drunk driving charge, the Fixer might suddenly confront you with a photostat of the citation you thought had been burned.

When that happens, you're fucked. Your price just went down to zero, and you are no longer an uncommitted delegate.

There are several other versions of the Reverse-Squeeze: The fake hit-and-run; glassine bags found in your hotel room by a maid; grabbed off the street by phoney cops for statutory rape of a teenage girl you never saw before. . . .

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Every once in a while you might hit on something with real style, like this one: On Monday afternoon, the first day of the convention, you — the ambitious young lawyer from St. Louis with no skeletons in the closet and no secret vices worth worrying about — are spending the afternoon by the pool at the Playboy Plaza, soaking up sun and gin/tonics, when you hear somebody calling your name. You look up and see a smiling, rotund chap about 35 years old coming at you, ready to shake hands.

"Hi there, Virgil," he says. "My name's J. D. Squane. I work for Senator Bilbo and we'd sure like to count on your vote. How about it?"

You smile, but say nothing — waiting for Squane to continue. He will want to know your price.

But Squane is staring out to sea, squinting at something on the horizon . . . then he suddenly turns back to you and starts talking very fast about how he always wanted to be a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi, but politics got in the way. . . . "And now, goddamnit, we must get these last few votes. . . ."

You smile again, itching to get serious. But Squane suddenly yells at somebody across the pool, then turns back to you and says: "Jesus, Virgil, I'm really sorry about this, but I have to run. That guy over there is delivering my new Jensen Interceptor." He grins and extends his hand again. Then: "Say, maybe we can talk later on, eh? What room are you in?"

"1909."

He nods. "How about seven, for dinner? Are you free?"

"Sure."

"Wonderful," he replies. "We can take my new Jensen for a run up to Palm Beach. . . . It's one of my favorite towns."

"Mine too," you say. "I've heard a lot about it."

He nods. "I spent some time there last February . . . but we had a bad act, dropped about 25 grand."

Jesus! Jensen Interceptor; 25 grand . . . Squane is definitely big-time.

"See you at seven," he says, moving away.

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The knock comes at 7:02 — but instead of Squane it's a beautiful silver-haired young girl who says J. D. sent her to pick you up. "He's having a business dinner with the Senator and he'll join us later at the Crab House.

"Wonderful, wonderful—shall we have a drink?"

She nods. "Sure, but not here. We'll drive over to North Miami and pick up my girlfriend . . . but let's smoke this before we go."

"Jesus! That looks like a cigar!"

"It is!" she laughs. "And it'll make us both crazy."

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Many hours later. 4:30 AM. Soaking wet, falling into the lobby, begging for help: No wallet, no money, no ID. Blood on both hands and one shoe missing, dragged up to the room by two bellboys. . . .

Breakfast at noon the next day, half sick in the coffee shop — waiting for a Western Union money order from the wife in St. Louis. Very spotty memories from last night.

"Hi there, Virgil."

J. D. Squane, still grinning. "Where were you last night, Virgil? I came by right on the dot, but you weren't in."

"I got mugged — by your girlfriend."

"Oh? Too bad. I wanted to nail down that ugly little vote of yours."

"Ugly? Wait a minute. . . . That girl you sent; we went someplace to meet you."

"Bullshit! You double-crossed me, Virgil! If we weren't on the same team I might be tempted to lean on you."

Rising anger now, painful throbbing in the head. "Fuck you, Squane! I'm on *nobody's* team! If you want my vote you know damn well how to get it — and that goddamn dope-addict girlfriend of yours didn't help any."

Squane smiles heavily. "Tell me, Virgil — what was it you wanted for that vote of yours? A seat on the federal bench?"

"You're goddamn fuckin'-A right! You got me in bad trouble last night, J. D. When I got back here my wallet was gone and there was blood on my hands."

"I know. You beat the shit out of her."

"What?"

"Look at these photographs, Virgil. It's some of the most disgusting stuff I've ever seen."

"Photographs?"

Squane hands them across the table. "Oh my god!"

"Yeah, that's what *I* said, Virgil."

"No! This can't be me! I never saw that girl! Christ, she's only a child!"

"That's why the pictures are so disgusting, Virgil. You're lucky we didn't take them straight to the cops and have you locked up." Pounding the table with his fist. "That's *rape*, Virgil! That's *sodomy!* With a child!"

"No!"

"Yes, Virgil — and now you're going to pay for it."

"How? What are you talking about?"

Squane smiling again. "Votes, my friend. Yours and five others. Six votes for six negatives. Are you ready?"

Tears of rage in the eyes now. "You evil sonofabitch! You're blackmailing me!"

"Ridiculous, Virgil. Ridiculous. I'm talking about coalition politics."

"I don't even *know* six delegates. Not personally, anyway. And besides, they all *want* something."

Squane shakes his head. "Don't *tell* me about it, Virgil. I'd rather not hear. Just bring me six names off this list by noon tomorrow. If they all vote right, you'll never hear another word about what happened last night."

"What if I can't?"

Squane smiles, then shakes his head sadly. "Your life will take a turn for the worse, Virgil."

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It Takes a Junkie to Know One

Ah, bad craziness . . . a scene like that could run on forever. Sick dialogue comes easy after five months on the campaign trail. A sense of humor is not considered mandatory for those who want to get heavy into presidential politics. Junkies don't laugh much; their gig is too serious — and the political junkie is not much different on that score than a smack junkie.

The high is very real in both worlds, for those who are into it — but anybody who has ever tried to live with a smack junkie will tell you it can't be done without coming to grips with the spike and shooting up, yourself.

Politics is no different. There is a fantastic adrenalin high that comes with total involvement in almost any kind of fast-moving political campaign — especially when you're running against big odds and starting to feel like a winner.

As far as I know, I am the only journalist covering the '72 presidential campaign who has done any time on the other side of that gap — both as a candidate and a backroom pol, on the local level — and despite all the obvious differences between running on the Freak Power ticket for Sheriff of Aspen and running as a well-behaved Democrat for President of the United States, the roots are surprisingly similar . . . and whatever real differences exist are hardly worth talking about, compared to the massive, un bridgeable gap between the cranked-up reality of living day after day in the vortex of a rolling campaign — and the fiendish ratbastard tedium of covering that same campaign as a journalist, from the outside looking in.

For the same reason that nobody who has never come to grips with the spike can ever understand how far away it really is across that gap to the place where the smack junkie lives . . . there is no way for even the best and most talented journalist to know what is really going on inside a political campaign unless he has been there himself.

Very few of the press people assigned to the McGovern campaign, for instance, have anything more than a surface understanding of what is really going on, in the vortex . . . or if they do, they don't mention it, in print or on the air: And after spending half a year following this goddamn zoo around the country and watching the machinery at work I'd be willing to bet pretty heavily that not even the most privileged ranking insiders among the campaign press corps are telling much less than they know.